



**VA Health Care
Upstate New York**

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VA TO TAKE APPLICATIONS FOR NEW CAREGIVER PROGRAM ***New Program enhances VA services for Family Caregivers***

Albany Stratton VA Medical Center (VAMC) – Today, staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published the interim final rule for implementing the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act 2010. This new rule will provide additional support to eligible post-9/11 Veterans who elect to receive their care in a home setting from a primary Family Caregiver.

“VA has always focused on one of the most important aspects of health care; the involvement of patients and their families in health care decisions. From choices they make to the actual delivery of care, their involvement is vital to their loved one’s overall health and well being. Because of this, VA has always worked closely with Caregivers, sharing the responsibility of care – in fact, sharing our mission by ‘caring for those who have borne the battle,” said Linda Weiss, Stratton VA Medical Center Director. “I’m proud of the fact that this new program builds on the foundation of Caregiver support now provided at VA and reflects what families and clinicians have long known; that Family Caregivers in a home environment enhance the health and well-being of Veterans under VA care.

Additional services for primary Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Service members include a stipend, mental health services, and access to health care insurance, if they are not already entitled to care or services under a health care plan. Comprehensive Caregiver training and medical support are other key components of this program.

Veterans and their Family Caregivers can apply for the new services starting May 9 at www.caregiver.va.gov. Marianne Hunter, LCSW, the Albany Stratton VA Medical Center Caregiver Support Coordinator is also available to assist with the application process and direct Veterans and their Family Caregivers to more than two dozen other programs VA offers Family Caregivers for support.

“I’m so happy to be able to assist caregivers by providing this additional program, helping them in their important role as a caregiver,” Hunter said. “This program will expand on the service VA already provides, such as: In-Home and Community Based Care; Respite Care; Caregiver education and training programs; Caregiver support groups; Home adaptation and equipment program; and a number of behavioral health services available to families. “

Assistance and information on additional resources are also available to Family Caregivers through VA’s **National Caregiver Support Line, 1-877-222-VETS (8387)**. Veterans and Caregivers with questions about the new program can contact **Marianne Hunter** at **(518) 626-6533**.